

Labour Market News

CENTRAL ALBERTA

Alberta Employment and Immigration

JOB SEEKERS

Drawing on opportunity

Careers in drafting

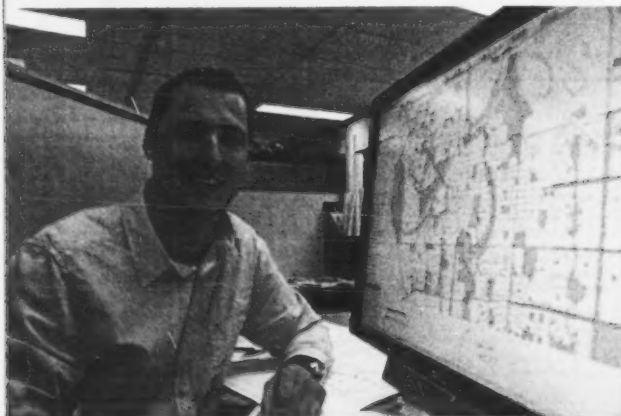
Pencil, ink and paper were the main tools of drafting technologists up until a few decades ago. Times have changed, and the drafting technologist's job has been revolutionized by technology.

"Basically, no one works on paper anymore," explains Neil Windsor, registrar with the Association of Science and Engineering Technology Professionals of Alberta (ASET). "Everything is computer aided or based on computerized drafting systems."

Drafters prepare the technical drawings and plans used by production and construction workers to build everything from park benches to rail cars, drilling rigs, sewer systems, industrial machinery, houses, office buildings, and oil and gas pipelines. "If it needs a drawing, it needs a drafting technologist," says Windsor.

Often drafters work in teams with architects or engineers helping interpret their designs, and the line between the designers and drafters is getting thinner every day. Most drafters are well trained technologists with extensive background in their specialty, and combined with the power of modern computers, they are being asked to do more than ever.

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Tristan Johnson, a drafter, spends a large part of his work day in front of his main tool, a computer with a 24-inch monitor.



Some barriers to work are less than they seem.

EMPLOYERS

Willing and able

Employing people with disabilities

People with disabilities have traditionally been underrepresented in the workplace, but in today's labour market, they can't and shouldn't be ignored.

"It's a huge pool of talent," says Floyd Jensen, supervisor with Alberta Employment and Immigration. "These are highly capable people. We need them."

For employers, however, the challenges of accommodating people with disabilities in the workplace can seem more bother than it is worth. The fear of expensive renovations or disruptions in workflow worry many employers. But there is support for employers who hire persons with a disability, and it is substantial.

The Alberta government's Disability Related Employment Supports program (DRES) provides expert advice and financial help to overcome barriers to employment in the workplace.

"We're here to help," says Jensen. "We have the expertise and can help fund changes to the workplace that will allow people with disabilities to contribute fully in the workplace."

The first step

People with disabilities may have learning, developmental or physical disabilities. Sometimes it is obvious. Often it is not, and employers may only have an inkling that an employee is having problems contributing to their full potential.

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See page 7 for a related Best Practice story.

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Rehabilitation Therapists

JOB SEEKER FEATURE STORY

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Demanding work—challenging and creative

Drafters not only have to know how to draw on computers, they have to ensure what they are drawing meets regulatory requirements and will be structurally sound. They often use their own knowledge of manufacturing and construction to create a better design. In many cases, some of the work done by drafting technologists would have been done by engineers a few decades ago. "With the new technology and with an intelligence behind the computer there is so much more a drafting technologist can do," says Leighann Butler, a manager with the City of Red Deer.

Working with technology

Computers have not only allowed drafters to take on more design work, they have freed drafters from the painstaking and incredibly detailed work of drawing by hand. Drafters spend most of their time working closely with computers, and one type of computer program stands out.

Computer aided drafting technology, called 'CAD' for short, is the standard in drafting. Almost all designs and concept sketches for building and mechanical devices are now done on CAD software (often using the program *AutoCAD*). A common job title in drafting is 'CAD operators.' The technology is very advanced and drafters can create a three-dimensional picture and rotate right on the screen seeing how a device, building or room will look well before it is built.

For civil drafting—planning civil projects like a new bridge or neighbourhood—the technology is different. Civil drafters rely on geographic information systems (GIS), which pull information from a database and display it graphically on a map or screen.

While computers can help express a drafter's thoughts, it is still the drafter that combines their notes, knowledge, creativity and experience into a final drawing. Drafters need a flexible and analytical mind with a flare for visualizing objects before they even exist.

High tech, and higher education

In a highly technical field, drafters need to be well prepared. Becoming a drafting technologist nearly always requires a two-year diploma. There are one-year programs available for drafting technicians, but the programs are rare. "There aren't many technicians in this field," says Windsor. The main programs in Alberta are technologist programs, and employment is heavily weighted to technologists.

Since nearly everything that is built is drawn up first, there is a staggering variety of drafters. In Red Deer there's even a specialist who just works with plumbing. Most drafting programs and diplomas specialize from the beginning to match a particular field. Architectural drafters, for example, can take an architectural technologist program at SAIT or NAIT. Drafting technologists working on civil projects take a completely separate course available at SAIT, NAIT and Lethbridge College.

Here are several common drafting specialties (see page 3 for more information).

- * **Architectural drafters (architectural technologist, NOC 2251)** draw the plans for buildings, often working closely with an architect. This specialty is tied closely to construction activity, which is doing very well in Central Alberta.
- * **Civil drafters (geomatics/surveying technologist, NOC 2254)** often work for municipalities laying out large-scale civil projects on computer, or mapping municipal features such as roads, parks and infrastructure.
- * **Mechanical drafters (mechanical engineering technologist, NOC 2232)** prepare detailed drawings of mechanical devices. Local employers include oil and gas companies.
- * **Electrical drafters (electrical engineering technologist, NOC 2241)** prepare wiring and layout diagrams used by workers who erect, install and repair electrical equipment and wiring in communication centers, power plants, electrical distribution systems, and buildings.
- * **Electronic drafters (electronics engineering technologist, NOC 2241)** draw wiring diagrams, circuit board assembly diagrams, schematics, and layout drawings used in the manufacture, installation and repair of electronic devices and components.

Opportunity amidst growth

New technology has vastly increased what a drafting technologist can do in a day. But increased efficiency can't keep up with the amount of work available. "Drafters do a lot of the front end work needed to get a project started," says Windsor. "And that's in high demand right now. There's such a huge need for construction, and there are opportunities in oil and gas. It's a good time for drafting technologists. There is a real need for their skills."

DRAFTING TECHNOLOGISTS**EDUCATION**

There are a variety of drafting specialties and a variety of education programs in Alberta. Visit ASET's website for a list of accredited programs in Alberta organized by subject (www.aset.ab.ca/programs.htm).

WAGES

Wages vary widely for drafting technologists, but a fairly common benchmark would be a starting wage of about \$25/hour. Visit www.alis.gov.ab.ca and check WAGEinfo. Also visit ASET's website at www.aset.ab.ca for their salary survey.

ACCREDITATION

ASET is the main body accrediting drafting technologists in Alberta. There are several levels of certification for students, recent graduates and experienced technologists. Certification is a valuable indication of skill and competency that can help make an impression on employers.

Mapping a career in drafting

Drafting technologists

JOB SEEKERS
Careers
TO CONSIDER

Drafters have a remarkable choice of industries to work for. While different types of drafters may start in a particular industry, there are opportunities to move between sectors. For example, a civil drafter working for a municipality can find new opportunities in oil and gas. Here a few common drafting career options in Central Alberta.

ARCHITECTURAL TECHNOLOGIST (NOC 2251)

Architectural drafting technologists draw architectural and structural features of buildings and other structures. They can specialize in residential buildings, industrial construction or commercial projects. They may also specialize their skills to match a certain type of building material such as reinforced concrete, masonry, steel or timber. Architectural drafting technologists have a variety of employment options. Many are employed by architectural firms, developers, or home design and construction companies. There are even opportunities to develop a business by freelancing design skills to individuals planning a new home or new home extension. The average pay for architectural technologists is fairly high in Alberta. According to the 2007 Alberta Wage and Salary Survey, the average salary was \$50,500 per year.

Training and : SAIT (www.sait.ab.ca) and NAIT (www.nait.ca) offer two-year programs for architectural technologists.



CIVIL DRAFTING TECHNOLOGIST (NOC 2254)

Civil drafting technologists (also called geomatics/surveying technologist) prepare drawings and topographical and relief maps used in major construction or civil projects, such as a new subdivision, highway, pipeline or sewage system. They may also complete surveys. Central Alberta municipalities employ civil drafting technologists. (For a list of municipalities visit employment.alberta.ca/central and link to 'Finding Work Publications,' then to 'Municipal Government.')

Civil drafting technologists may also be employed by developers, and the skills are useful in oil and gas exploration and in environmental consulting. In general, municipalities offer secure employment and good benefits. On the other hand, private employers may pay a little more. Population growth, plus residential, commercial and industrial expansion are the key drivers of growth in this occupation. According to the 2007 Alberta Wage and Salary Survey, the average salary was \$43,400 per year.

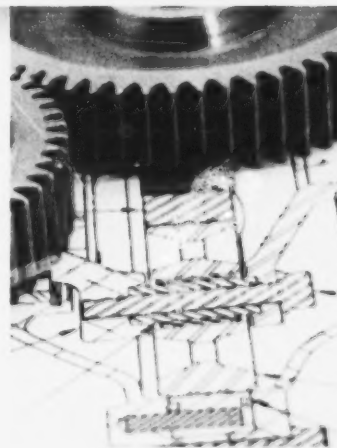
Training: SAIT (www.sait.ab.ca) and NAIT (www.nait.ca) offer two-year programs for architectural technologists, as does Lethbridge College (www.lethbridgecollege.ab.ca).



MECHANICAL ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGIST (NOC 2232)

In general, mechanical drafters prepare specifications and drawings for mechanical components, equipment and systems. Local oil and gas companies hire mechanical drafters, and there are opportunities in firms needing technical drawings for training manuals. Central Alberta's immense petrochemical industry also has positions (see the June 2007 edition of Finding Work In ... for more information about the petrochemical sector at employment.alberta.ca/central). Since the opportunities are spread across a variety of industries, there is no single job board that will post them all. Searching the websites of large local industrial companies is a good job hunting strategy, and regular visits to manufacturing company websites will also catch a few opportunities. Companies will also post job ads on college job boards looking to hire new graduates. According to the 2007 Alberta Wage and Salary Survey, the average salary was \$62,800 per year.

Training: SAIT (www.sait.ab.ca) and NAIT (www.nait.ca) offer two-year programs for mechanical engineering technologists.



WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE A ...

Drafting technologist

How did you start in this career?

I majored in geography in university, but I really started in high school with an interest in the sciences. In university, I started taking geography courses, and found that was for me. But I realized that if I wanted to get into the field I had to take a technical direction and that direction basically becomes surveying, and I started down the GIS road (Geographic Information System). I am by no means a GIS professional, but I took enough courses to do the drafting I need to do. It was enough to get my first job doing digital cut-block maintenance for forestry, which is basically digital drafting of forestry activity and tree planting activity.

What do you enjoy about your job?

There's no real day that's the same. There's always some sort of new challenge that keeps my interest. I need something fresh, something new, otherwise I get bored. Especially in the municipal atmosphere, there's variety—there's so many business units that you do work for. We do everything from water systems, to mapping the city's entire park system. We have everything on the map—trees, benches, everything. I'll be first to say I love my job. I enjoy my job.

Does your job affect your lifestyle?

People don't understand my job. If you were to ask people on the street what GIS was, they wouldn't have a clue. Even in an atmosphere like this, you almost have to be salesman as much as you just do your own work. Working for a municipality you're part of an organization, and everybody should be there to help everyone else. But the challenge is when somebody doesn't know that you can help them or make their life easier, then you're not being as productive or as efficient as you could be. You really have to explain, 'see, we can do this—it's at your disposal.' But you have to jump on board too and say 'Okay, I'm ready to spend the time to get the information you need.'



Tristan Johnson works in his office with some of his work behind him.

What are your career goals?

I've been with the city two years, and somewhere down the road I'd like to own my own business or become a consultant of some sort. I see a lot of oilfield business opportunities, and environmental businesses. But right now I'm just trying to be a sponge. I'm surrounded by people who are very good at what they do, and I'm learning.

What advice would you give to someone looking at this career?

I think you have to keep your eyes open. This is an up-and-coming profession. If you think about cell phones, they're now GPS enabled. The technology surrounds us, and if you enjoy spatial analysis it's endless. The tool is so powerful, and it's not the tool that's limiting, it's the ideas that you can come up with. Anything you can think of you can probably do something with it, or somebody else is doing something with it. Here, GIS is used in everything from social planning to environmental analysis.

CAREER PROFILE

Tristan Johnson

Officially, Johnson is a graphics designer with the City of Red Deer, but it doesn't reflect what he does. "What I'm really doing is a GIS mapping technologist." One current project is providing the new addresses for a planned industrial park northwest of the city. In addition, Johnson is improving the mapping system for emergency services. "It maps all the information emergency services need from fire hydrant locations to the street network—everything emergency wants to know when they're on the scene." Helping other workers do their job well is a major part of the job for Johnson. "I have even helped social planning look at issues like secondary suites. It's fun, it's challenging, and it's really rewarding."

Working as a CIVIL DRAFTING TECHNOLOGIST (NOC 2254)

Wages

Civil drafting technologist can begin their career earning about \$45,000 working a five-day week during normal daytime hours (on an hourly basis the starting wage would be \$25 to \$35 an hour). Working for a municipality, benefits are often excellent and can include flex days.

Education

Johnson's route to a career in civil drafting was through a university geography degree and focusing on technical requirements, but many drafting technologists start their careers with a two-year technologist program. Programs are available at NAIT (www.nait.ca), SAIT (www.sait.ab.ca) and Lethbridge College (www.lethbridgecollege.ab.ca).

Specialties

Drafters tend to specialize in a particular field in school such as architectural drafting or civil drafting, but after that there is considerable choice within a field. "There is more choice now than there ever was," says Johnson's manager Leighann Butler. "Technologists can go into government, forestry, oil and gas. It's all based on the same principles."

Health Care for everyone

Making health care work for low income earners

Canadians are extremely proud of their health care system and rightly so. In this province, Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan (AHCIP) covers nearly all the basic health care needs of Albertans.

Coverage under the AHCIP is available to all eligible residents and their dependents, and no eligible resident will be denied. To help pay for a portion of the health care system, Albertans currently pay a health care premium of \$44 a month per person and \$88 a month for a family, but after January 1, 2009 even this fee will be ended.

While health care premiums seem low to many, they can be a financial headache for people with tight budgets. It is a burden low income earners can reduce or even eliminate using one of two government programs (see bottom left). A second concern for low income earners is coverage.

AHCIP covers a lot, but not everything. Prescriptions, dental work and ambulance rides are not covered by AHCIP, and a bad tooth or unexpected ambulance trip can suddenly throw a low-income earner into serious debt. For a better package of coverage, low income earners may want to take advantage of a pair of government programs that greatly expands coverage for families and adults (see bottom right).

CUTTING THE COST

There are two programs to help low income Albertans reduce or even eliminate their health care insurance premiums. One program waives the premium entirely for Albertans facing financial crisis. A second program is an ongoing subsidy that reduces the cost of premiums for low income Albertans from one year to the next.

Waiver of Premiums Program

A sudden financial shock can destroy budget plans, suddenly turning the minor expense of the health premium into a major burden. For Albertans who are unable to pay their premiums due to recent financial difficulty, the Alberta government can waive the fees entirely. Eligibility for the waiver is based on your and your spouse or partner's combined average monthly income (before deductions) for the three months prior to the date the application is signed. If your average monthly income comes in at or below the numbers on the chart below, you qualify for a 100 per cent waiver of health care premiums for six months.

Single	\$1,430/month
Family – no children	\$2,270/month
Family – with children	\$2,670/month

Health care premium subsidy

While the waiver program is designed for Albertans who need immediate relief, the subsidy program reduces or even eliminates health care premiums for an entire year. How much an individual or family receives under the program is determined by the previous year's income, so an Albertan with a low income on their 2007 tax return might qualify for this year's subsidy that started on April 1, 2008 and will continue until March 31, 2009. Notably the subsidy reaches back two years, so if your income was low in 2005 and 2006, you are eligible for subsidy covering for health care premiums made in 2006 and 2007. To find out if you qualify see the chart below.

Family status	100 per cent premium subsidy	Partial subsidy
Single	Income of less than \$17,450	\$17,450-\$20,970
Family-no children	Income of less than \$26,200	\$26,200-\$33,240
Family-with children	Income of less than \$32,210	\$32,210-\$39,250

IMPROVING YOUR COVERAGE

Coverage offered by the AHCIP is extensive, but it is not complete. Some services like dental work and ambulance trips are not covered by AHCIP, yet they can be extremely expensive. There are two programs in Alberta for low income earners who want more of their health care needs insured.

Alberta Adult Health Benefit (AAHB)

The Alberta Adult Health Benefit is a free benefits program for low income earners that pays for many of the services not covered by Alberta Health Care Insurance. The program is a relief for low income earners worried about prescription bills or the cost of an ambulance trip. AAHB is targeted to helping pregnant women, people with high prescription costs and few resources, and people leaving Income Support or Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) because they have gained income from employment, self-employment or the Canada Pension Plan Disability program. But if you do qualify under any of these categories or have a low income, apply.

Alberta Child Health Benefit (ACHB)

The Alberta Child Health Benefit (ACHB) is a premium-free health benefit plan that pays for health services of children in low income families that are not available through standard Alberta Health Care Insurance. The benefit includes eyeglasses, prescription drugs, dental care, and much more. If you are a single parent making \$24,397 or less per year, your child can be signed up. If you have more children, or are a couple, your income can be higher. Sometimes your child can be signed up even if your income is higher than the official limits. If your income has dropped a lot in the last year or if your family has high health costs, exceptions can be made. A chart showing income thresholds for ACHB is available on the Employment and Immigration website (see below).

Finding help and applying

To find out about premium assistance programs and for application forms visit the Alberta Health and Wellness website at www.health.alberta.ca. Link to 'Alberta Health Care Insurance,' and then to 'Premium Assistance Programs.' Or phone Health and Wellness directly by dialling 310-0000 and then entering 427-1432 for toll free access.

For information on how to improve coverage and for application forms for AAHB and ACHB, visit the Alberta Employment and Immigration website at employment.alberta.ca/hb. If you have any question about either program, don't hesitate to call toll free 877-469-5437.

JobBank

**TOP
JOBS**

Jobs posted July 1 to 31, 2008, Red Deer Region

Red Deer Region includes Carstairs, Didsbury, Olds, Innisfail, Red Deer, Sylvan Lake, Stettler, Wetaskiwin, Ponoka, Lacombe, Rocky Mountain House, Caroline and Rimbey as well as rural areas and smaller towns around those.

OCCUPATION TITLE AND NOC CODE	NUMBER OF VACANCIES	AVERAGE WAGE
All Occupations	2327	\$16.70
Food Counter Attendants, Kitchen Helpers and Related Occupations (6641)	159	\$10.41
Welders & Related Machine Operators (7265)	118	N/A
Retail Salespersons & Sales Clerks (6421)	112	\$13.56
Oil & Gas Drilling, Servicing & Related Labourers (8615)	105	\$21.88
Oil & Gas Well Drillers, Servicers, Testers & Related Workers (8232)	102	N/A
Truck Drivers (7411)	96	\$21.70
Light Duty Cleaners (6661)	93	\$12.11
Food & Beverage Servers (6453)	86	\$9.48
Oil & Gas Well Drilling Workers & Services Operators (8412)	85	N/A
Construction Trades Helpers & Labourers (7611)	72	\$16.71

Source: Service Canada, Canada-Alberta Job Order Bank Services
N/A (Not available) means five or fewer companies posted wages for this occupation.

FEATURED JOB

Truck drivers (NOC 7411)

Truck drivers operate gasoline or diesel-powered trucks, tractor-trailers and similar vehicles to transport goods and materials over local routes or long distances. On the JobBank, the main employers posting ads for truck drivers in July were oil and gas service companies and freight companies. But truck drivers are employed by a variety of industries including the retail sector, government, forestry, construction and manufacturing. A diverse choice of employers is matched by a diverse choice of work locations. Truckers are needed throughout Central Alberta.

Truck drivers are required to have a Class 1, 2, or 3 licence, and many truck drivers obtain the licence through local driving schools and Red Deer College offers a professional driving certificate.

The average salary for a truck driver was \$53,200, according to the 2007 Alberta Wage and Salary Survey.

To find out more about the job description for truck drivers, and what NOC codes mean, visit www.alis.gov.ab.ca/occinfo.

How to use the JobBank

JOB SEEKERS

Internet job boards like the Job Bank (www.jobbank.gc.ca) are powerful tools. With a few clicks, a job hunter can search any region of Canada for a particular job category, and even search for employers who've posted ads in the past. Job Bank also has advice on writing a resumé, tips for the job search, advice for finding unadvertised positions, information on self-employment, and notes on finding work in non-profit organizations. With computers and the Internet, job hunters can even automate parts of their job hunt.

With **Job Alert**, any job that matches one of three possible profiles will be automatically emailed to users.

Job Match allows a user to create profiles that will be automatically shown to employers searching for new workers (see page 9 for other job boards and more resources for employees)

Meet employers: Employer Connections

Once a week Red Deer's Labour Market Information Centre hosts Employer Connections where a single employer will be available to sit down and explain their labour needs. It's an opportunity for job seekers to speak directly with the people who can best explain a job and a career. Find out about upcoming Employer Connections at employment.alberta.ca/central where there are links to two-page summaries of employers' presentations. This web page also has useful information on upcoming job fairs and events, links to previous editions of the Labour Market News, and links to Finding Work In ..., a monthly publication giving practical advice about finding work in different industries.

EMPLOYERS

For employers, the Job Bank offers a simple and free way of posting job ads right across the country while the site's **Job Match** function allows employers to immediately search a database of resumé.

The site also has hundreds of well organized links and articles that explain every stage in the hiring process. To post a job ad visit www.jobbank.gc.ca.

Number of career employment ads by industry

Administration NAICS 56	389
Accommodation and food NAICS 72	374
Mining, oil and gas NAICS 21	354
Manufacturing NAICS 31-33	203
Retail NAICS 44	179
Health NAICS 62	179
Construction NAICS 23	173
Logistics NAICS 48-49	108
Other services NAICS 81	88
Scientific and technical NAICS 54	35

Hiring an Able workforce

AISH clients prove their worth at Sobeys's

**Best
Practice**
FOR EMPLOYERS

Faced with a choice between hiring an experienced person on Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH), and an inexperienced candidate without a disability, Sobeys's manager Dirk Abrahamsz doesn't think twice. "That's easy, you go with experience every time."

The choice happens to be on the right side of the law, but Abrahamsz isn't thinking about the law when he hires. He's thinking about pure business sense. "We hire the best person for the job," says Abrahamsz.

For some employers, the choice is a little harder to make. AISH is specifically designed to support people with disabilities severe enough to prevent them from earning a living (see below). But that doesn't mean they can't participate in the workforce. One key is finding a good fit from the start.

With the right type of work, AISH clients can play a major role in the workplace. There are limitations, but there are far more opportunities. "Of course sometimes a disability can prevent someone from lifting or doing one type of job, and if they can't do the work we can't hire them," says Abrahamsz. "But we have a variety of positions here and there's often a fit. One of our cashiers lost her right arm. She does what she needs to do, and we're pretty happy with what she does."

Abrahamsz doesn't know exactly how many people he's hired with disabilities, and he doesn't know how many are receiving AISH.

For information on what an employer can ask in an interview visit www.alis.alberta.ca, and link to 'eProducts & Services,' then to Tip Sheets where you can search for a variety of documents including 'what can employers ask?.'

Most of the time Abrahamsz finds out that a potential employee has a disability during an interview. "Usually people are pretty up front and they tell us right away. Sometimes they might be worried but it doesn't hurt their prospects." And Abrahamsz sees very little reason to worry on an operational or employee management level.

"There aren't any real operational differences," says Abrahamsz. "We schedule everyone the same way. There's a limit on what an AISH client can receive before it affects their support level, but they pretty much take as many hours as they can get."

In fact, one of the only minor changes Abrahamsz has seen in his workplace has been slightly positive. "I think there are some issues for people with disabilities finding work," says Abrahamsz. "And when they're given chance they show up for the shift and they appreciate contributing to the workforce."

Mostly however, Abrahamsz doesn't see any difference worth mentioning and that's pretty much how he likes it. "We just employ people who can do the job," says Abrahamsz. "And our employees on AISH do really well."

What is AISH?

The Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) program provides a living allowance, health, child and personal benefits for people with a permanent disability that severely limits the ability to earn a living. The programs supports any kind of disability whether it is physical or developmental. While receiving AISH benefits, recipients can earn some income from other sources. Visit www.seniors.gov.ab.ca/AISH for more information.

Need to hire?

If you believe you have the perfect job for a person receiving AISH benefits, please contact Employment Placement and Support Services (EPSS). They can match your needs with their client base. Ideal positions offer part-time hours with some flexibility and a welcoming work environment with opportunities for individuals to grow and develop their skills.

Phone EPSS at 403-343-6249 for more information.

COMING EVENTS IN CENTRAL ALBERTA

CENTRAL ALBERTA JOB FAIR

Meet face-to-face with employers who are hiring!
9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Wednesday, September 10

Westerner Park, 4847A-19 St., Red Deer

Free admission and parking

New to the job fair will be the Employer Corner, with local employers giving short presentations about their current job openings within their companies.

For more information about the job fair, go online to <http://employment.alberta.ca/apps/cajif/jobseekers.asp>.

MATURE WORKER FORUM

In conjunction with the job fair, a Mature Worker Forum will be held Wednesday, September 10 at Westerner Park. There will be a variety of information sessions between 8 a.m. and 11 a.m.

See next month's issue of the Labour Market News for full details.

EMPLOYERS

Willing and able

Continued from page 1

Identifying the barriers faced by employees with disabilities is the first step to solving problems, and it is much easier for everyone in an open, trusting work environment. "Make sure your employees know they can come to you freely and openly," says Jensen. "You might want to use the company newsletter to mention supports are available for employees—a few simple reminders that there are programs available can make employees feel much more comfortable, and it builds trust."

Call in the professionals

Once you know there's a barrier to productivity caused by a disability, don't hesitate, call DRES. "We have professionals," says Jensen. "They will come to a workplace, assess it and make suggestions. Sometimes it's as easy as a bit of software, or an ergonomic chair. Often solutions are far easier than the employer anticipates."

Making changes

Some solutions are simple. Some are not. Either way, when it comes to solving a problem, DRES can help fund changes to the workplace. "We have dollars for people with barriers," says Jensen. "We've helped hire aides for people with disabilities, and bought specialized vehicles and equipment."

More than just one employee gains

DRES is designed to overcome barriers to employment for individuals, but making an effort for one person pays off for the organization as a whole. "Diversity in the workforce isn't a catch phrase," says Jensen. "It's real. Companies that just hire the same type of employee over and over again find they can't problem-solve effectively."

Helping one employee to find solutions in the workplace also pays dividends for morale. If an employer makes a difference in one worker's life, it builds trust throughout the organization.

No really ... just call

DRES is a valuable tool for employers, and it only takes a phone call to begin building a better workplace. "We really would like to work more directly with employers," says Jensen. "We want to make this as straightforward as possible. Call us and we can start the ball rolling. We can bring in the expertise, and start finding the solutions."

Information and local contacts for DRES

- The DRES program is fully explained on the Alberta Employment and Immigration website at employment.alberta.ca. Follow these links to get to the DRES page: Career & Employment » Training for Work » DRES.
- If you think you have a need for DRES in your workplace phone Diane Stonehouse 403-340-5420 or Richard Morrow at 403-340-5127.

EMPLOYER Resources

Both federal and provincial governments have practical programs to help meet the current need for workers in this tight labour market. Here are a few programs that can be of assistance to business.

Information sources

The Labour Market Information page on the Alberta Employment and Immigration (E&I) website offers links to labour force statistics, forecasts, and wage and salary information. (employment.alberta.ca/lmi)

- The Central Alberta Economic Partnership (CAEP) website (www.centralalberta.ab.ca) has hundreds of links to information sources, and programs, including:
- Support for Training Workers
- Wage Subsidy Programs
- Recruiting Employees
- Employment Services in Central Alberta
- Foreign Worker Employer Guide

Seminars and networking

Employer Connections are held every Wednesday at the Labour Market Information Centre, 2nd Floor, First Red Deer Place, 4911-51 St. (across from the Provincial Building).

The meetings are an opportunity to meet job seekers, employment agencies and career counsellors.

Each week a single employer is showcased and presents their perspective.

To participate free of charge call 403-340-4342 and ask for a Business and Industry Liaison.

Labour solutions

- Red Deer Aboriginal Employment Services.
Ph. 403-358-7734
- Career Assistance Network teams unemployed workers with employers.
Ph. 403-341-7811
- Employment Placement Support Services supports adults over 25, and persons with disabilities age 18 and over.
Ph. 403-343-6249
- Employment Access offers employment programs for clients with disabilities.
Ph. 403-341-2363
- DRES provides support and assistance to employers hiring people with disabilities. Contact the Canada-Alberta Service Centre in Red Deer.
Ph. 403-340-5353

Personalized help when needed

There are dozens of programs available to employers. E&I employees will visit the workplace and provide a summary of options and opportunities.

For example, they can direct managers to initiatives that will help their business.

For more information call 403-340-4342 and ask for a Business and Industry Liaison.

Sign up free: We're live and online

In the News, an electronic digest about regional business expansions, relocations and closures, and Finding Work In, which profiles different career opportunities, are available online at employment.alberta.ca/central.

A free subscription service will notify you by e-mail when the latest edition of each product comes out.

On the same web page there are Labour Market News products for Stettler, Wetaskiwin, Vermillion and Wainwright.

JOB SEEKER Resources

There are many resources in the central region that can be helpful to job seekers and workers alike.

Where to find us

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Job search and career websites

- www.jobbank.gc.ca (Job listings, links and other services)
- www.alis.gov.ab.ca (Alberta Learning Information Service)
- www.workopolis.ca (Job listings)
- www.monster.ca (Job listings)
- www.nextsteps.org (Job resources for youth)
- www.albertajobs.com (Job listings)
- www.hgcareers.com (Job listings)
- www.healthjobs.ab.ca (Health care job listings)

Job search and career information by phone

Alberta Career Information Hotline:
1-800-661-3753

Fax: 780-422-0372 TDD: 780-422-5283

Resumé review service

The Government of Alberta e-Resumé Review Service is a great way to have a resumé reviewed and improved, before sending it to employers.

To access the service, log on to www.alis.gov.ab.ca/hotline/resume and follow the instructions to send your resumé for review.

The service is free to residents of Alberta and those seeking work in Alberta.

Resources for labour market information

These websites offer a wealth of labour market information on Alberta and specific communities.

- employment.alberta.ca/lmi (Alberta Employment and Immigration)
- www.alis.gov.ab.ca (Alberta Learning Information Service)
- www.albertafirst.com (Business and economic information)
- www.centralalberta.ab.ca (Central Alberta Economic Partnership)

- www.alis.gov.ab.ca/employment/lmi/alberta.asp (Labour market information across Alberta)
- www.labourmarketinformation.ca (Service Canada)

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The meetings are an opportunity to meet employers face to face.

New to Town?

Past issues of Labour Market News featured information for communities in Central Alberta.

See past bulletins for employment, social services, health care, transportation and other great resources available in your community.

CITY / TOWN	MONTH
Camrose	July 2007
Didsbury	October 2007
Drayton Valley	June 2007
Innisfail	September 2007
Lacombe	August 2007
Olds	February 2007
Ponoka	November 2007
Red Deer	January 2007
Rocky Mountain House	April 2007
Stettler	March 2007
Sylvan Lake	December 2007
Wetaskiwin	May 2007



LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION CENTRES

Labour Market Information Centres (LMICs) provide information to help you make career, learning and work decisions. LMICs have books, magazines, newspapers, software and videos about employment-related topics.

There are LMICs across Alberta. For a complete list, see: employment.alberta.ca/lmic.

LMICs in Central Alberta:

Camrose Alberta Service Centre

3rd Flr., Gemini Centre, 6708 - 48 Ave.
Ph. 780-608-2525

Drayton Valley Sub-Office

2nd Floor Provincial Building
5136 - 51 Ave. Ph. 780-542-3134

Olds Alberta Service Centre

4905 - 50 Ave. Ph. 403-507-8060

Red Deer Canada-Alberta Service Centre

2nd Floor First Red Deer Place, 4911 - 51 St.
Ph. 403-340-5353

Rocky Mountain House Alberta Service Centre, 4919 - 51 St. Ph. 403-845-8590

Stettler Alberta Service Centre

4835 - 50 St. Ph. 403-742-7586

Wetaskiwin Alberta Service Centre

1st Floor Macadil Building
5201 - 51 Ave. Ph. 780-361-1272

Lloydminster LMIC

5016 - 48 St. Ph. 780-871-6445

Wainwright LMIC

810 - 14 Ave. Ph. 780-842-7500

Vermilion LMIC

4701 - 52 St. Ph. 780-853-8164

